



For Immediate Release

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Setting the Record Straight...

Treasure Coast News Columnist Disconnected from Facts

In the run up to the Governor's visit, Treasure Coast News columnist Eve Samples got front page treatment with a piece that lacks facts.

The lack of basic facts requires us to Set the Record Straight....

Samples' piece omits A LOT, including that:

- 1. Florida has invested \$2.5 billion in projects.**
- 2. Governor Scott invested and committed \$63 million into St. Lucie River projects.**
- 3. Restoration projects have significant federal financial responsibility.**

Claim: *"We can predict how Scott's visit will go. He will promise help in the most vague of terms."*

What Samples Omitted: Provided to *Treasure Coast News* was Governor Scott's letter to the Army Corps of Engineers which lays out SPECIFICS about the state's funding commitment and how the Corps can help address the environmental conditions of the river.

Governor Scott said:

I respectfully ask the Corps of Engineers and Congress to immediately meet the following goals to help the region:

1. *Take the steps necessary to enhance the Herbert Hoover Dike System for Lake Okeechobee.*
2. *Fulfill your cost-match obligations by investing \$1.6 billion in South Florida environmental projects, which you owe the state in lost cost-share.*
3. *Provide flexibility to the State of Florida and local partners to pursue critical projects by providing block grants for the design and construction of the projects.*

Claim: *“With his visit to Stuart on Tuesday, I hope he begins to view the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon the same way.”*

What Samples Omitted: The Governor has delivered tens of millions of dollars to area projects, worked to leverage area resources to mitigate impacts and developed long term plans for nutrient reductions. Below are the following factual omissions:

- The 2013-2014 *Florida Families First Budget* invested \$20 million into the C-44 STA project.
- The Scott Administration has worked with the South Florida Water Management District to pump water out of the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries onto public/private lands to lessen the burden on the St. Lucie River.
- The Scott Administration completed four Basin Management Action Plans for the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River. These plans were developed collaboratively with local stakeholders and serve as the roadmap for improving the water quality of the Lagoon. The adopted plans call for more than \$300 million dollars to be invested in storm water, wastewater, and agricultural best management projects, and the DEP stands ready to assist through its grant and low interest loan programs.
- Gov. Scott invested \$3 million in the FY13/14 *Florida Families First Budget* for the Martin County Danforth Creek Basin Project to fund an inventive hybrid wetland project to clean water going into the St. Lucie River.

Claim: *“The project will help treat local runoff before it flows into the estuary, though it won’t stop the damaging releases from Lake O.”*

What Samples Omitted: As the Governor said in his letter to the Corps:

“...the Corps of Engineers’ inaction that led to [their] decision to open the S-80 Control Structure to relieve the stresses on the outdated Lake Okeechobee Herbert Hoover Dike System...”

“...The 50-year-old Lake Okeechobee structure is supposed to be a 100 percent federal responsibility. Yet, it has deteriorated due to a lack of investment and maintenance by the Corps of Engineers...”

“... had the federal government met all of its obligations in maintaining the Lake Okeechobee dike system, promptly authorized critical projects that benefit the region and met their cost-

match promises, the environmental conditions of this region could have been improved and the crisis in the region today would have been mitigated..."

"... Too often, Florida families have footed the bill for the federal portion of these projects. The federal government owes Florida about \$1.6 billion in investments for these projects..."

"...many projects are being held up due to federal red tape, and state and local partners do not even have the opportunity to move forward with projects that would clean water and mitigate impacts to the region. For example, the C-43 reservoir project in Hendry County would store storm runoff water and mitigate damage to the Caloosahatchee River estuary..."

"...Equally troubling, as certain areas of the dike begin to experience seepage in the middle of hurricane season, the Corps has advised that it cannot begin hardening walls on the dike system again until 2017..."

Claim: *"If Scott thinks "it's working" here, he's wrong."*

What Samples Omitted: The State of Florida has invested \$2.5 billion in South Florida environmental projects with the agreement of 50/50 cost-share with the federal government. Had the federal government met its cost-share obligations and appropriately authorized projects (including the C-43 reservoir project) about \$5 billion total would have been in South Florida. That's a game changer. Thankfully, the state is not waiting on the federal government.

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